

Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations

South Dakota's State Rehabilitation Council (General Agency):

The **State Rehabilitation Council** – is established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Act) and 34 CFR 361.16-361.17 of its implementing regulations.

South Dakota's State Rehabilitation Council was created in South Dakota codified law, Section 1-36A-5 and termed as the **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation**.

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation's Annual Report of Activities for Fiscal Year 2006 reflects the following:

- ✓ The **State Rehabilitation Council** - known in South Dakota as the **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** – gives advice to and works in partnership with the vocational rehabilitation agency in South Dakota - **Division of Rehabilitation Services**.
- ✓ The **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** – plays a significant role in ensuring that the vocational rehabilitation program operates effectively.
- ✓ The **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** works in partnership with the **Division of Rehabilitation Services** in developing policies, planning activities, evaluating program effectiveness and carrying out other functions related to the vocational rehabilitation program.
- ✓ The working relationship between the **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** and the **Division of Rehabilitation Services** is a true partnership focused on ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate, timely, and effective vocational rehabilitation services.

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act and the State's open meeting laws, SDCL 1-25-1, the Board holds quarterly meetings at a minimum. These meetings are open to the public and held in various locations statewide. Meetings held during the report period included:

June 7-8, 2007 in Sioux Falls
September 13-14, 2007 in Pierre
November 26-27, 2007 in Rapid City
March 10-11, 2008 in Pierre

Summary of Input and Recommendations:

- Staff support agreement for the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council was re-negotiated. The Chairperson of both the Board and Council submitted a letter to the provider, which indicated they were pleased with the provision of staff support.
- The Board scheduled their June meeting to coincide with the Youth Leadership Forum. Members were interested in hearing the conversation between the youth and the legislative panel members and other local and state leaders. The luncheon following the panel presentation also provided an opportunity for members to visit with the youth, panel members and other invited guests.
- Board members participated in the vocational rehabilitation services stakeholder's meetings held by Rehabilitation Services Administration staff. Members provided input regarding the vocational rehabilitation services delivery system to include promising practices, areas for improvement and any need for technical assistance.
- Several Board members attended the Road to Freedom Tour event in Sioux Falls. Disability advocates, people with disabilities, family members, local/state leaders came together for the day's events, to include networking and touring the traveling exhibit featuring the disability rights movement, demonstrations of recreational activities,

and hearing presentations about building cross disability coalition efforts to defend and strengthen disability rights.

- The Board agreed to coordinate its solicitation process for nominations with that of the Statewide Independent Living Council. Nominees were submitted to the Governor's Office for his review and action along with the names of members who were interested in serving a second term. Appointments were made and as a result the Board has met all the composition requirements as required by the Rehabilitation Act.
- As a result of Board and Division discussions involving the Order of Selection, the Division incorporated an "Order of Selection Survey Form". This survey collected data to ensure appropriate services were being provided or referrals were being made.
- The Board approved a request from the Sioux Falls Americans with Disabilities Act Committee to cover some of the costs associated with hosting an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Anniversary Celebration held in Sioux Falls.
- The Board and Division undertook a major task of examining the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. Members of the Consumer Services Committee met a number of times throughout the year to review information (i.e., public meeting comments, consumer satisfaction survey results, Freedom to Work survey results, Department of Transportation fiscal year end data, input gathered at conferences, case file reviews). The process entailed identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the agency and outlining new goals, strategies, and action steps. This information became the foundation for working on the State Plan document and related attachments. The process of preparing the State Plan and related documents was shared with the Board, Division field offices' staff and general public for additional input and comment.

- A Board meeting was planned to coincide with PLANS (Persons Leading Accessible Networks of Supports). This was an informational exchange of providing background information of whom and what each other does. Questions were utilized to enhance dialogue (i.e., What are you hearing from people about their experiences with vocational rehabilitation services; Are there missing pieces that if filled would help those presently falling through the cracks?). The environment was informal resulting in open dialogue at each table and comments were collected.
- A request was made to have a presentation from the Business Leadership Network staff regarding what services and activities are offered to area employers. Information was shared on the Symon Awards luncheon, training for the human resource managers, employer training, Greenstar Symposium, Mentoring Day, Disability Expo, and the leadership round tables involving employers.
- The Board approved the Executive Committee's recommendation for the FY 2008 resource plan. Monies were obligated to support National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities, Governor's Awards Luncheon, public forums, and individual/organizational requests for training requests.
- Several Board members participated in the Division's Fall Conference which focused on attitude change and motivation, hiring and retaining employees in a world of competition and change, leadership in times of constant change and crisis, ethical considerations, strategies to decelerate violent encounters, identifying functional limitations, and serving returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. Conference's attendees included staff from the vocational rehabilitation service delivery arena, employers and human resource managers.
- Board Member Orientation was held for new members. Topics included: History of Rehabilitation, principles and policies, Rehabilitation Act, State Rehabilitation Council Role, organizational overview of the Department of Human Services, State Plan

document, public meetings, statewide needs assessment, benefit specialists, and other activities of the Board and Division.

- The Board requested a presentation on the Office of Special Education's special education indicators' study. Information obtained included percent of youth on an IEP who are employed and who are enrolled in post secondary education. The survey reported the percentage of youth competitively employed, how many hours worked per week, type of employment setting, percentage of those covered by family insurance, and number of them who have had contact with a vocational rehabilitation counselor.
- Recommendation to have the following items on the Board's meeting agendas: Statewide Needs Assessment, Year End Results Performance Indicators, Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities, RSA Annual Review Report and Monitoring Review, and Activities of Daily Living Services Survey Results. In addition, the Board has requested periodic updates on the following: Statewide Independent Living Council, Workforce Development Council, Freedom to Work, Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program, Department of Labor 'Navigator' positions, and Youth Leadership Forum.
- A request was made following the Freedom to Work Project Update to have periodic updates on two areas: the Employer Resource Network and Career Development Team. This involves relationship building and problem solving with employers, human resource managers, private providers, vocational rehabilitation staff and consumers who are interested in employment.
- At the Board's November meeting the Final Report from Rehabilitation Services Administration was added in addition to the Year End Results data. Discussion continued on the goals of how to address the challenge of increasing wages for individuals with disabilities and identifying employment opportunities in higher paying occupations in our rural state. As a result of the discussion, the

recommendation was made to have a representative from the Department of Labor come and provide an overview of the technical programs and alternative schools, and provide an update on the Job Corps program.

- The Board and Division will send representatives to Partners in Policymaking graduation session in April to their scheduled “listening session”. This is a facilitated discussion on a variety of topics, which impact people living with a disability (i.e., vocational rehabilitation, independent living, transportation, housing, social security, and education). Preliminary discussions with the Executive Director of the South Dakota Association of Community Based Services have taken place about scheduling a meeting with the Board/Division and Association to talk about vocational rehabilitation services.
- The ‘State Plan Submission Process’ has been on various agendas throughout this reporting period. The Consumer Services Committee is assigned the task of reviewing draft attachments and providing recommendations to the full Board. During the March meeting, the Consumer Services Committee agreed to review all related information and provide their recommendations to the Executive Committee for further action prior to the Division presenting the information to the State Workforce Development Council.
- Funds were awarded to eleven communities, which responded to the Board’s Request for Funding Notice to host events, which support National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Sponsored activities will include disability etiquette training, employer training function, chamber mixers, and other disability awareness activities.
- Division staff shared information regarding the Consumer Satisfaction Survey with the Consumer Services Committee. Information obtained from this survey has been utilized in the planning and development of specific state plan attachments. Annually, the committee reviews the survey instrument to ensure appropriateness and timeliness of the questions asked.

- Members participated in the MidWinter conference which focused on succeeding against the odds, overcoming adversity, developing your talents and ethical dilemmas of consumer choice. Other breakout sessions included: work incentives, self-employment, culture of poverty, working with transition age students and planning for success.
- The Board reviewed information submitted by the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Council (NCSRS). The NCSRS was seeking the Board's support of a resolution. The Board responded that it supported the NCSRS's concept but did not have enough information to endorse the resolution.
- Throughout the year the Consumer Services Committee is asked to review and provide comment on draft policies and program guides. The committee reviewed the Residency Requirement for VR Applicants and Individuals being Served by Multiple State Public VR Agencies. The full Board also had the opportunity to submit further comment on the program guide, in addition to it being made available on the Division's website for further public comment.
- The Public Awareness Committee's funding recommendations for hosting the 2008 National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities were approved by the full board. The Division agreed to provide financial assistance, if it was needed.
- During the March meeting, the State Plan document and related information was discussed. The Consumer Services Committee agreed to meet to review the attachments in April and provide their recommendations to the Executive Committee prior to presenting it to the Workforce Development Council.
- The Board agreed to host their June 2008 meeting in conjunction with the Youth Leadership Forum to provide new members the opportunity to attend and seasoned members to return. The November 2008

meeting will be planned to coincide with the South Dakota Association of Community Based Services. This will allow members to meet and visit with the directors and staff of adjustments training centers and obtain more feedback on the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services.